

that tried to resist the worldwide spread of American popular culture after the war. An attractive network of state-sponsored youth clubs strengthened Soviet cultural diplomacy on the domestic front of the Cold War. According to the author, one of the assets of the Soviet (Thaw-era) model of modernity was the active, joyful participation of young people in officially approved cultural activities. However, this advantage over a presumably more consumer-driven popular culture of “the West” was gambled away in the militant turn of the Brezhnev years.

For obvious reasons, one single book cannot explore all relevant aspects of this multifaceted topic with the same intensity. So, not surprisingly, *Socialist Fun* suffers from a certain imbalance, privileging for example western music and dance over other forms of popular culture, focusing primarily on the Thaw years and paying special attention to educated young urbanites. As a general tendency, Tsipursky accentuates the positive aspects of being young during the Thaw. He makes quite clear that he considers “state-sponsored popular culture” to be a positive accomplishment of Soviet socialism, to such a degree that even democratic societies can learn from it. This kind of comment may surprise. However, credit should be given to the author for making his convictions transparent.

Overall, *Socialist Fun* is an inspiring, well-researched book that opens up new perspectives on average young Soviet people who influenced Soviet cultural life after the war more directly than previously thought. Following Juliane Fürst’s study on *Stalin’s Last Generation* (2010), Tsipursky makes a valuable contribution towards a better understanding of the “post-Stalin generation” (p. 9). What is more, it is also a book about the Soviet project as a whole—a project whose success and failure largely depended on (young) people’s acceptance. In this sense, socialist fun was “serious business” (p. 234).

Peter Collmer  
University of Zurich

WHITTLE, Jane, ed. – *Servants in Rural Europe: 1400-1900*. Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2017. Pp. 284.

After years of neglect in favour of “productive” labour, scholars have, over the past few decades, come to recognize the importance of service labour for understanding the economic, social, and cultural history of Europe and beyond. As the work of the Cambridge Group for the Study of Population and Social Structure showed in the 1960s, in preindustrial England servants made up a significant proportion of the population, and perhaps 60% of its youth. In the late 1970s, the group’s founder, Peter Laslett, identified live-in service as one of the three key characteristics of the Western family, and E. A. Wrigley described it as both an essential form of *de facto* family planning and a mechanism for redeploying surplus labour. Since then, scholars from Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos (*Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*, 1994) to Sheila McIsaac Cooper and other contributors to the

Servant Project (*Proceedings of the Servant Project* = *Actes du Servant Project*, 2001-2005) have examined the roles played by life-cycle service in the maturing of young men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds, offering opportunities to acquire practical and social skills, contacts, and the economic resources needed to become independent and marry. And since all but the poorest of early modern households included at least one servant, we can—as Tim Meldrum (*Domestic Service and Gender, 1660-1750*, 2000), Laura Gowing (*Common Bodies*, 2003), and Paula Humfrey (*The Experience of Domestic Service for Women in Early Modern London*, 2011) have shown—also learn about employers' lives through the experience of those who served them, while Douglas Hay and Paul Craven's work on master and servant legislation (*Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955*, 2004) illuminates the ways in which states attempted to regulate the development of wage labour.

Running through *Servants in Rural Europe* is a productive dialogue/debate with the core concepts discussed in these and a myriad of other studies. Christine Fertig confirms the validity of the life-cycle model for northwestern Germany, where in the eighteenth century service offered younger generations training and helped redistribute surplus labour from peasant households with little land to those with high demand. Jeremy Hayhoe shows that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Burgundy wine harvests continued to employ young men, but also older people and the children of peasant families themselves. Cristina Prytz, on the other hand, focuses closely on the experience of older, highly skilled servants in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Sweden and emphasizes the attractions of life-long service. Writing of rural Norway in the same period, Hanne Østhus investigates mobility between various ways of earning a living, arguing that the very category of "servant" is one with "porous boundaries." Finally, in what is (rather regrettably) the only chapter to deal with southern Europe, Raffaella Sarti analyzes quantitative data available for several regions of Italy and across a broad time span, finding surprisingly high numbers of rural servants and of neo-local, "simple" families, findings that challenge accepted "geographies of service," and question simplistic applications of the European marriage pattern.

This book, however, does more than revise received ideas: it opens up a field of research which—with the exception of the work of Ann Kussmaul (*Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, 1981)—has been almost wholly neglected. As the volume's editor, Jane Whittle reminds us in her introductory overview, "Early modern Europe was an overwhelmingly rural society: before 1800 at least 85 per cent of the population lived outside of large towns. The great majority of people, including servants, had some involvement in farming. Yet the literature on servants continues to be dominated by studies of urban and domestic servants" (p. 2). The essays brought together here help to redress this imbalance, providing in-depth analyses of the characteristics and working conditions of servants in specific agricultural contexts across Europe over five centuries. No grand, cohesive picture is offered. "The significance of local and regional variations as well as to temporal changes is a theme relatedly emphasized," notes Whittle (p. 15). Comparing forms of remuneration and servants' preferences in spending and saving in sixteenth-

century Flanders, Thijs Lambrecht highlights differentiation from village to village. Sarah Holland's study of the Doncaster area of Yorkshire contrasts employment patterns in estate villages with those typical of smaller communities. Other scholars take a broader view. Hayhoe distinguishes between labour needs of wine-producing Burgundy and those of other areas of France, while Østhus contrasts the sex ratios and conditions of service in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rural Norway with those prevailing in other parts of the Danish empire during the same period. Sarti notices the distinct types of agricultural organization in southern and central Italy, but also that "within any area the very presence of plains, hills, and/or mountains has been a precondition of different economic and social arrangements, including a different incidence of rural service" (p. 237). Temporal discontinuities are recurrent topics. Lies Vervae't's study of one farm in coastal Flanders illustrates the transition from a peasant society to one dominated by large, commercially orientated agriculture. In describing the development and eventual steep decline of the Dutch farm servant system, Richard Paping takes into account variations in types of land and farming, age structure, social background, and wage levels, but also the emergence of the "Bourgeois Civilization Offensive," which placed a high value on private family life and made leaving home unattractive. The importance of cultural and administrative constraints is of special interest. Early modern states frequently resorted to law in their attempts to force their subjects into service and regulate contracts, mobility, and modes of recruitment and thus contrast social instability. Labour laws play important roles in the studies by Lambrecht and Holland, while Charmian Mansell shows how, in Tudor and Stuart Gloucestershire, community attitudes about appropriate behavior by young women could vanify the application of the Statute of Artificers, which in theory imposed compulsory service and limited the number of children that could be kept at home.

Linked by common themes and rigorous methodologies, the chapters of *Servants in Rural Europe: 1400–1900* also constitute independent studies, each amply documented and illustrated by graphs, tables, and microhistories that will constitute an indispensable mine of data and ideas for specialists. Particularly interesting for cultural historians is the wide range of rare archival sources used. Vervae't's study is based on the uniquely surviving accounts of a large farm in medieval coastal Flanders, and Lambrecht's study of sixteenth-century Flanders on lists compiled for tax collection purposes. Other rare sources include Whittle's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century account books, Mansell's English church court depositions, Hayhoe's witness depositions in Burgundian seigneurial courts, and Prytz's fascinating life-stories of parishioners compiled by priests in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Sweden.

Such sources offer glimpses of the day-to-day lives of ordinary people in early modern Europe beyond even the specific topics of the essays, and it will be in interests of inter-disciplinarily if in future studies more attention is devoted to the generic constrictions of the diverse genres. As for the main concerns of these scholars, the recruitment, remuneration, legal status and gender tissues discussed here will no doubt further exercise scholars of the history—and modern realities—

of agricultural work, a sector that, with the growth of long-distance migration and the employment of casual, poorly regulated labor for cheap food production, is becoming an urgent issue for the contemporary world. But for now, it would be ungenerous to demand more from this substantial and stimulating book.

Jeanne Clegg  
*University of Ca' Foscari Venice*

YOUNG, Kathryn A. and Sarah M. McKINNON – *No Man's Land: The Life and Art of Mary Riter Hamilton*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017. Pp. 272.

The title and subtitle of this somewhat sad account of the life and art of Canadian artist Mary Riter Hamilton (1868-1954) succinctly summarize its content. *No Man's Land* is the biography of a painter whose successes can broadly be associated with women and whose disappointments can largely be associated with men. For Hamilton, these came fast and furious. Married at twenty in 1889, her father died the following year; her only son was stillborn two years later; and her husband died barely a year later. With what little money she inherited, she graduated from millinery and china painting to a noteworthy career as a professional artist, which this book documents in detail. Determined to succeed, Hamilton travelled west from Ontario to British Columbia in search of a living and voyaged east to Europe in search of training and meaningful subject matter.

The book is the product of extensive research begun more than thirty years ago by Winnipeg educator Angela E. Davis (1924-1994), to whom the book is dedicated. It divides broadly into three parts. Much of the early part of Hamilton's story is set against the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario provincial and municipal art worlds of ladies' teas, private teaching, and intimate exhibitions. This section also includes a helpful and extensive analysis of Hamilton's long period of study in Europe. The second part focuses on the six-year First World War art project that obsessed her, while the third part documents the artistic and mental unravelling that subsequently dogged her until her death at the age of eight-five—impoverished—in 1954.

For those of us used to associating First World War art with the cementing of national identity through battle achievements like Vimy Ridge (1917) and the postwar success of the Group of Seven, Hamilton's story forms a necessary and important corrective by showing us how gendered that achievement really was. Compare Hamilton's biography with A. Y. Jackson's, for example. He was a near contemporary, and, like Hamilton, his beginnings were relatively humble; he went to work young in the commercial art business. To improve his skills, like Hamilton, he studied in Europe and, also like her, dreamed of earning his living as a professional artist. A First World War commission from the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) as an official war artist launched his career as a painter and thereafter he mixed usefully with prime ministers, businessmen, gallery and